



The effect of social-media-influencer-popularity on purchase-intention of a fashion-product through emotional attachment

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the effect of social media influencer popularity on the purchase intention of a fashion product through emotional attachment. The sample in this research is the general public, who have social media and intend to buy fashion products by looking at the popularity of influencers. The number of samples used in this research was 170 respondents. The sampling method uses a purposive sampling technique. Data analysis in this research uses Partial Least Square (PLS). The results of this research show that the popularity of social media influencers has a positive influence on emotional attachment. Emotional attachment has a positive influence on purchase intention. The popularity of social media influencers has a positive influence on purchase intentions. and emotional attachment has a mediating influence on the relationship between social media influencer popularity and purchase intention.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Social media is very popular with people of all ages (Lou & Yuan, 2019). They've also become a new tool for marketing communication. Customers are exposed to a variety of digital-social-media-Marketing-Initiatives, promoted and implemented by companies quickly, regardless of time and location constraints (Kim & Kim, 2021). Now, users can interact directly online with their favorite brands, famous influencers, and other users thanks to social-media-Platform-Features like live chat and comments (Vrontis et al., 2021). Just by clicking the like-or-dislike buttons or writing a positive or negative comment on a post, social media users can express their opinions and views about a particular product, action, or brand.

According to (Hill et al., 2017), social media influencers have been around for a long time, but recent attention to them in marketing and their influence on consumer decisions has increased. According to (Hill et al., 2017), compared to other social media tools such as blogs, social media influencers haven't learned much about how they influence consumer decision-making. However, according to (Hill et al., 2017), there are some differences between influence and blogging, especially since social features are more prominent on platforms like blogs.

Studies involving vlog videos investigate parasocial interactions with influencers, as well as how popularity affects an influencer's expertise and credibility (Hill et al., 2017; Sakib et al., 2020). They also emphasize how influencer credibility affects consumer awareness and intentions to buy products. (Munnukka et al., 2019). However, there are still differences about what affects the popularity of influencers and the intention to buy viewers. (Hill et al., 2017). The relevance of research on the influence of fashion influencers indeed focuses on the importance of the fashion market and the attractiveness of video-vlog-fashion. This research is an area of academic research that has not been studied much.

Current research tries to overcome these differences by setting out the following objectives: to test components that explain the popularity of influencers towards fashion products and to test how influencer popularity affects viewers' desire to buy suggested fashion products. The three main drivers of influencer popularity are influencer skills, homophilia between influencer and viewer, and emotional attachment of viewer to influencer. It's based on the literature on social media, like blogs and video blogs. (Hill et al., 2017; Hsu et al., 2013; Lin & Kao, 2010; Munnukka et al., 2019; Sakib et al., 2020). Homophilia is a less-studied concept in marketing and social commerce. It shows the perceived similarities between influencers and viewers in terms of attitudes, values, morals, appearances, and backgrounds.

With the evolution of social media influencers, purchasing intentions, and emerging issues like genuine emotional attachment between influencers and followers, research on this topic is expanding. The study aims to investigate and analyze various aspects using different research models, locations, and scopes, while also assessing respondent responses from prior research.

Differences emerged from previous studies conducted by (Hill et al., 2017; Hsu et al., 2013; Munnukka et al., 2019). Their focus solely on the popularity of influencers on social media did not necessarily capture the authentic emotional attachment within these platforms. Some studies consistently use SPSS analysis to evaluate the emotional attachment variable. The Likert scale is employed to measure the majority of respondent responses, providing a comprehensive framework for data collection. Therefore, by utilizing Partial Least Square (PLS) analysis techniques, the study explores emotional attachment in influencers, offering a comprehensive perspective on social media dynamics. Additionally, the study includes respondents aged 17 to 50, allowing for variations in responses to reflect diverse circumstances.

For example, when they decide to buy something or decide what to buy, they need to know, who they're going to follow, to convince them of their intentions to purchase something. In addition, influencer popularity must have an emotional relationship between the audience and the influencer, as well as a psychological approach to the audience, so that the audience can easily understand and digest what they say.

The author conducted a study of the popularity of social media influencers versus the intention to buy fashion products through emotional attachment, based on the explanation of the problem.

According to (Azevedo et al., 2018), Internet users who have a lot of followers and popularity are known as social media influencers. According to (Herviani et al., 2020), they can quickly share information or stories on social media, and many users and communities will see every post they post. According to (Glucksman, 2017), there is technology today that allows us to identify and monitor the role of influence in an organization or brand. Dienes System records likes, comments, shares, and the number of blogclicks.

According to (Jia et al., 2022), purchase intent is an effective marketing strategy to predict market share and sales. It is also often used to assess the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Purchase intention is a type of decision-making that is defined as a purchase intention (Shahid et al., 2017), as the intention to buy something, according

to (Morinez et al. 2007), but purchase intentions are defined by a buyer's tendency to buy a particular item under certain conditions.

Love is a kind of emotion that can be experienced by someone or something. According to (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016), there are different levels of attachment, where high attachment is associated with strong bonds, love, affection, and passion. According to (Fernandez & Castillo, 2021), emotional attachment is defined as the emotional relationship between a buyer and the behavior suggested by an influencer.

The sense of emotional bond that exists between a person and other consumer entities, such as people, goods, or brands, is called an emotional link. (Hazan & Shaver, 2014; Thomson et al., 2005), Social media influencers serve as public opinion leaders because they have a huge impact on the public. (Yang & Wang, 2015), influencers can meet the fantasy needs, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment of their audiences and get positive emotional responses from others. According to (Casaló et al., 2020), they differ from celebrities in several ways, including the intensity of their relationships and interactions with the public, especially followers, and the number of interactions they make every day.

According to (Bagozzi et al., 1999; Berry, 2000), emotions and affective circumstances affect consumer judgment, motivation, and decision to buy goods. According to (Bagozzi et al., 1999), one factor that drives consumers to connect with a product or brand is their emotions. According to (Thomson, 2006), the customer's emotional relationship with a brand can predict the customer's loyalty and commitment to that brand, which makes sense. (Kowalczyk & Pounders, 2016) investigated the emotional relationship of traditional celebrities with possible brand purchases. According to (Folkvord et al., 2019), the level of attachment to influencers predicts the amount of time spent watching their blog videos. Therefore, emotional attachment to an influencer will make the influencer more known. Then it was concluded that: H1: Social media influencer popularity has a positive influence on emotional attachment.

The perception of the acceptable emotional relationship that buyers have when buying local and international goods in the same situation suggests that they are more likely to buy the goods if they have a more enjoyable experience before buying them. The decision of Malaysian buyers to buy American or local products is heavily influenced by emotional connections. So, according to (Al-Natour et al., 2011), emotional bonds have a positive impact on purchasing intentions.

The focus of this research was to find out whether the influence perceived by followers correlated with the emotional attachment to the influencers and the purchasing intention perceived by their messages. We also looked at, how this power might affect followers' choices of brands suggested by influencers. According to (Casaló et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2015), how these influential forces can affect followers' behavior, has been done little research so far. Then it was concluded that: H2: Emotional attachment has a positive influence on purchasing intentions.

According to (Hollebeek, 2011), followers can act with positive thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward a suggested brand when they benefit from relationships with brand supporters, such as acquiring knowledge about a product. In other words, followers can follow brand advice by participating in mutual behavior rather than just receiving and reading messages passively. As a result, the stronger the persuasion of social media influencers, the more followers want to talk directly to the suggested brand.

Compared to traditional influencers, (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017), found that social-media-Influencers, like on Instagram or YouTube, have a greater influence on the purchasing intentions of women and men between the ages of 17 and 50, because they are considered more trustworthy and have stronger social ties. According to (Hsu et al., 2013), influencers have a huge influence on individuals who seek advice before making a purchase. Consumers usually rely on the opinions and advice of references to reduce the uncertainty and risk of purchase. According to (Bergkvist & Zhou, 2016), online buyer

intentions are influenced by the popularity of social media influencers. According to (Hill et al., 2017), influencers transfer consumer preferences to supported brands, enhancing brand preferences and purchasing intentions. According to (Ohanian, 1991), influencers make customers more willing to buy the advertised products. Then it was concluded that: H3: The popularity of social media influencers has a positive influence on purchasing intentions.

If followers believe that they maintain self-defining and satisfying relationships with influencers based on factors that enhance affective relationships and strengthen relationships, such as similar attitudes and thoughts, or other psychological or demographic characteristics, followers should be more prepared to accept the opinions and values put forward by the influencer. (Ladhari et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2018). Therefore, we argue that when the popularity of social media influencers becomes relevant to their followers, followers will form a strong emotional bond. They will understand and feel social media influencers deeply and continuously. Diese sense of connectivity can make influencers more persuasive.

We can assume that the perceived influence seems to play a mediating role in the relationship between the predecessor and the follower, combining the expected effect of the value of the information felt and the emotional attachments to the influence felt, as well as the potential impact of these effects on the face-to-face positive influence of the intention to buy. Behavior done deliberately. Indeed, when social media influencers become vulnerable to their influence, they can change the behavior of their followers by sharing positive content that attracts public attention and creating intimate and emotional attachments. (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Ki & Kim, 2019). Only popular social media influencers, who have high value and efficiency, for example, who are more regarded as the most valuable and effective social-media-popular-influencer, can change the behavior of their followers. Then it was concluded that: H4: Emotional attachment mediates the relationship of social-media-influencer-popularity to purchase-intention.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Sampling and Data Collection

In this research, the sampling method used purposive samplings. In this research, the samples were respondents who had the following criteria: intending to buy fashion products, social media users aged 17-50 years, and who had been connected to social media accounts of influencers or fashion products they liked. On the other hand, data collection is done using online survey methods. Online surveys are done by disseminating questionnaires on some social media to get a target sample size that has been specified. However, of the 192 respondents' data available, only 170 respondents could be analyzed.

2.2 Measurement

In this study, I used measurements from several previous researchers, which consisted of social media influencer popularity (Ladhari et al., 2020), emotional attachment (Sukoco & Hartawan, 2011), and purchase intention (Ulfa & Utami, 2017). Furthermore, to measure perception in each respondent, then each measurement item was measured using a Likert-Scale from very disagree (1) to very agree (5). We also included some scanning questions, such as how long social media users & how many times they view influencer content in addition to demographics, such as gender, age, and occupation.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Respondent characteristics

Based on data analysis, it is known that the characteristics of respondents in the gender category were mostly 109 people (64.1%) women, 143 people aged 17-25 years (84.1%), and 114 people in the working category were students. (69.4%) Table 1. Next, to analyze this research model, I used a structural equation (SEM) using SmartPLS.

Table 1 Characteristic respondent

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	61	35,9%
	Female	109	64,1%
Age	17-25 year	143	84,1%
	26-34 year	12	7,1%
	35-43 year	12	7,1%
	44-50 year	3	1,8%
Work	Students	114	69,4%
	Privet sector employee	41	24,1%
	Self-employed	8	4,7%
	Not yet working	3	1,8%

Source: Primary data, 2023

At this stage of analysis, I first performed a confirmation factor analysis (CFA), each measurement item showing a load factor value above 0.7. Furthermore, the extracted variance ratio (AVE) for each construction has values ranging from 0.51 to 0.61 or more than 0.5. According to (Hair et al., 2014), it shows the measurements used also have a good discriminatory and convergent validity.

Furthermore, in the Reliability Test, I used the composite reliability analysis and Cronbach alpha. Based on the results of the analysis, the value of the compound reliability ranges between 0,917 and 0,938. It is remarkable that the value of the composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha is higher than 0.7, so it can be concluded that the measurements used have good reliability (Hair et al., 2014). The results of the validity and reliability analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Validity and reliability results

Indicator	Outer Loading	AVE	Cronbach Alpha	Composite reliability
Emotional Attachment 1	0,914			
Emotional Attachment 2	0,886			
Emotional Attachment 3	0,920	0,811	0,884	0,928
Social media Influencer popularity 1	0,828			
Social media Influencer popularity 2	0,930			
Social media Influencer popularity 3	0,852			
Social media Influencer popularity 4	0,840			
Social media Influencer popularity 5	0,883	0,753	0,917	0,938
Purchase Intention 1	0,836			
Purchase Intention 2	0,824			
Purchase Intention 3	0,847			
Purchase Intention 4	0,776			
Purchase Intention 5	0,866	0,690	0,887	0,917

Source: Primary data, 2023

Since the model SRMR value was 0.058 for the saturated model and 0.058 for the estimated model, the goodness of fit test results of the PLS model shown in Table 4.8 showed that the model was perfectly suitable and could be used to test the research hypothesis. The model fit result on the NFI-Value, shown in the table above, showed a value of 0,887, which is almost equal to 1, indicating that the tested model has good stability. The results of the conformity-test-analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Compliance Test Analysis Results

GOF	Analysis Results	Cut-Off Value	Status
Chi-Square	181.685	Expected big	Good
SRMR	0,058	≥ 0,05	Good
d_ULS	0,305	≥ 0,05	Good
d_G	0,175	≥ 0,05	Good
NFI	0,887	≥ 0,70	Good

Source: Primary data, 2023

After carrying out a suitability test on the model used. I did a structural model analysis. Based on the results of the structural model analysis, it was found that the statistical T-value between the emotional attachment variable and purchase intention was 3.156 with a significance of 0,002, so hypothesis 2 was accepted. Furthermore, the popularity value of social media influencers with emotional attachment is 10.157 with a significance of 0,000, so hypothesis 1 is accepted. Meanwhile, the popularity value of social media influencers with purchase intention is 7.412 with a significance of 0,000, so hypothesis 3 is accepted.

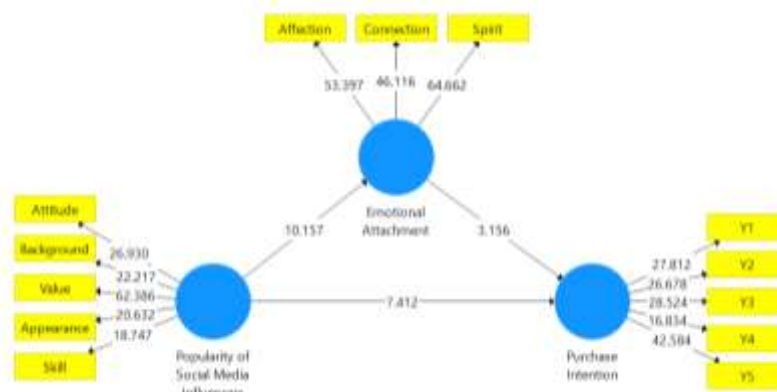


Figure 1 structural model

Finally, the value of emotional attachment mediating the popularity of social media influencers with purchase intention is 3.153 with a significance of 0,002, so hypothesis 4 is accepted. So, based on the results of the analysis, all hypotheses were accepted, and no hypotheses were rejected. The results of the SEM-structural analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Results of Structural Analysis SEM

Structural Relationship	Original Sample (O)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values	Hypothesis
Emotional Attachment → Purchase Intention	0,269	3.156	0,002	Hypothesis 2 accepted
Social media influencer popularity → Emotional attachment	0,544	10.157	0,000	Hypothesis 1 accepted
Social media influencer popularity → Purchase intention	0,535	7.412	0,000	Hypothesis 3 accepted
Social media influencer popularity → Emotional attachment → Purchase intention	0,146	3.153	0,002	Hypothesis 4 accepted

Source: Primary data, 2023

3.2 Discourse

The influence of social-media-influencer-popularity on emotional attachment. Social media influencers have a positive effect on emotional attachment. Because they

have a huge impact on the public, social media influencers serve as public opinion leaders. According to (Yang & Wang, 2015), influencers can meet their audience's fantasy needs, identification, status, affiliation, and attachment and get positive emotional feedback from others. According to (Casaló et al., 2020), some things distinguish them from celebrities, such as the level of their relationships and interactions with the public, especially followers, and the number of interactions they do every day.

The influence of emotional attachment to purchase intention. Emotional attachment has a positive influence on purchasing intentions. The perception of the emotional relationship that buyers can accept when buying local and international goods in the same situation suggests that they are more likely to buy the goods if they have a better experience before buying them. According to (Sukma et al., 2023), the attitude of such social media influencers can have a positive influence on purchasing intentions. According to (Asshidin et al., 2016) therefore, emotional bonds increase purchasing intent. Emotional relationships exist between buyers and companies, according to research (Barhemmati & Ahmad, 2015; Shahid et al., 2017). It provides a significant prospective relationship to the company's marketing goals. According to (Shahid et al., 2017) online companies prioritize customer engagement. Highly engaged consumers earn a 23 % increase in revenue. This is because they spend more money on the product and buy it more often. According to (Shahid et al., 2017), highly engaging consumers also tend to ask their friends and family to buy the product. According to (Putra et al., 2020), the behavioral controls perceived by influencers can have a positive effect on their followers.

The influence of the popularity of social media influencers on the purchase intention. The popularity of the influence of social media on purchasing intentions has a positive influence. According to (Putri & Aquinia, 2023), social media has a positive influence on purchase intentions. According to (Annie Jin & Phua, 2014), their research suggests that social media influencers with many followers, especially popular Instagrammers, have a greater tendency to make online purchases when they post positive tweets. When followers benefit from relationships with brand supporters, such as acquiring knowledge about a product, they can act with positive thoughts, feelings, and behavior toward the suggested brand. (Hollebeek, 2011). In other words, instead of just receiving and reading messages passively, followers can follow brand recommendations by participating in reciprocal behavior. As a result, more followers are interested in speaking directly with the recommended brands, because social media influencers are more able to convince their followers.

The role of emotional attachment in mediating the influence of Social-Media-Influencer-Popularity on purchasing intentions. Emotional attachment has been shown to mediate the influence of social-media-influencer-popularity on purchasing intentions. The virtual world promotes an emotional attachment between the influencers and their followers. Well-known influencers on social media may get positive feedback from others (Yang & Wang, 2015). This is because influencer popularity can satisfy the audience's desires for fantasy, identity, status, affiliation, and attachment. As a result, social media influencers are thought to be more intimate, accessible, and connected to celebrities than influencers. (Abidin, 2015; De Veirman et al., 2017). As a result, stronger emotional bonds can affect the popularity of social media influencers and their followers. We can assume that the influence felt seems to play a mediating role in the relationship between predecessor and follower. Combining the expected effect of the value of perceived information and the emotional attachment to the perceptible influence, as well as the potential impact of these effects on direct interaction, can enhance the intention to buy. According to (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Ki & Kim, 2019), behavior is deliberately chosen. When social media influencers become vulnerable to their influence, they can change the behavior of their followers by sharing positive content that attracts public attention and building intimate emotional attachments.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, we concluded several findings. The popularity of social media influencers has a positive influence on emotional attachment. Emotional attachment has a positive influence on purchase intentions. The popularity of social media influencers has a positive influence on purchasing intentions, and emotional attachment has a positive influence, which can mediate between the popularity of social media influencers and purchasing intentions.

Marketers need to develop relevant, significant, and effective strategies to promote their products through online communication platforms such as blogs and video blogs, as online customers are increasingly dependent on them. Practitioners can observe changes in consumer preferences by hiring influencers to provide product reviews; this study suggests that influencers significantly shape consumer desires based on their experiences. Companies must select the right influencer to convey information and gain trust from their target consumers. The study's results indicate that influencers with high popularity significantly influence consumers to desire products based on their experiences. Moreover, since this research focuses on the product, future studies in this area can explore how the popularity levels of influencers impact the provision of services. Additionally, vloggers have started aligning themselves with specific commercial brands, though this research intentionally implies the advertising intentions, especially of influencers. Therefore, further research could be conducted to examine the impact of influencer advertising intentions on consumers both explicitly and implicitly.

Influencers are advised to improve their personalities, especially in terms of emotional attachment, so that they are more interested in shopping on social media. One way is to give good reviews or comments about fashion products. You can also attract customer attention by making vlog videos about fashion products. In this way, influencers they like can make the fashion product attract the attention of customers and make them interested in what they see.

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